

## Running in the family: Patterns of complement insubordination in Germanic

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### 1. Introduction

**Insubordination** (Evans 1993, 2007)

= conventionalized main clause use of formally subordinate clauses

**This paper:**

- Complement clauses in Dutch, German, Danish, Swedish & English
- Marked as subordinate by:
  - Complementizers (*dat, dass, at, att, that*)
  - Word order:
    - Finite verb in final position (vs second position) for Dutch & German
    - Finite verb following (vs preceding) sentence adverbs for Swedish & Danish

E.g. independent complement clauses in German, Danish and Dutch

(1) *Dass ihm nur nicht schlecht dabei wird!* GERMAN

COMP he.DAT PRT NEG bad DEM.PREP become.PRS

'I just hope that doesn't make him feel sick.'

(2) *At noget så katastrofalt kan ende så godt.* DANISH

COMP something PRT catastrophic can.PRS end PRT well.

'[I can't believe] that something so catastrophic can end so well.'

(3) A: En in één keer gaat dat vliegtuig een vaart maken om de lucht in te komen. Nou ik

denk wat gebeurt hier. Net een hele snelle lift he. DUTCH

B: ggg. Ja.

A: *Dat je zo omhoog gaat.*

COMP you DEM up go.PRS

'A: And all at once the plane speeds up to get into the air. I thought what's going on here.

Just like a very fast elevator isn't it. B: Yes. A: When you go up like that.'

**Descriptive questions:**

= establishing constructional range across five languages

#### • **Semantics:**

- Three basic 'interpersonal' domains (cp Evans 2007)
  - Deontic: desirability of potential SoAs, eg (1)
  - Evaluative: evaluation of actual SoAs, eg (2)
  - Elaborative: elaboration of previous stretch of discourse, eg (3)
- Secondary parameters (eg control, expectedness) distinguish insubordination from 'classic' exponents of the same domains (eg modal verbs)

#### • **Formal marking:**

- As evidence for distinct construction types (particles, modal verbs etc)
- In relation to constructional semantics (transparency)

#### • **Comparison:**

- Gaps in the range of construction types  
➔ German/Dutch > Swedish/Danish > English
- Differences in settings for individual construction types

**More general questions** about insubordination:

#### • **Constructional status**

= one single construction type?

- Apparent formal unity, but problems with generalization (cp Verstraete et al. 2012)
- Evidence for lower-level conventionalization & origins
  - Cross-linguistic comparison
  - Relation to main-subordinate counterparts

#### • **Insubordinate status**

= all independent uses insubordinate?

- Problems for 'elaborative' types (cp also Mithun 2008, Lindström & Londen 2008)
  - No clear break in dependency
  - No clear break in semantics
- Alternative analysis: subordination 'on the move' within dependency, compare
  - Wide-scope subordinators (e.g. Thompson 1985)
  - Subordinate-coordinate shifts (e.g. Verstraete 2007)

## Data & literature:

- Data: from spoken corpora & internet corpora
  - Dutch data: Verstraete, D'Hertefelt & Van linden (2012)
  - German data: Panther & Thornburg (2011), Maekelberghe (2011)
  - Swedish & Danish data: D'Hertefelt & Verstraete (ms)
- Literature: DUTCH e.g. Boogaart (2010, 2011); GERMAN e.g. Weuster (1983), Oppenrieder (1989); SWEDISH e.g. Andersson (1982), Lehti-Eklund (2001), Lindström & Londen (2008); DANISH e.g. Christensen & Heltoft (2010), Delsing (2010)

## 2. Evaluative types

= **evaluation** of actual SoAs (aka 'exclamatives', 'emotives' etc)

**Basic semantic distinction:** expectedness

- Unexpected**, evaluated negatively or positively:

(4) *Dat u dat durft te zeggen.* DUTCH  
COMP you DEM dare.PRS to say  
'[I can't believe] that you dare to say that.'

- Expected**, evaluated negatively:

(5) *Dass er auch immer alles fressen muss!* GERMAN  
COMP he PRT always everything eat must.PRS  
'Why does he always have to eat everything!'

### 2.1. Dutch, German, Swedish & Danish

#### Encoding:

- Unexpected** = markers establishing **scales**, e.g. particles, phase verbs, focus markers

(6) *Dat iemand zo hard kan zijn.* DUTCH  
COMP someone so hard can.PRS be  
'[I can't believe] that anyone can be so cold-hearted.'

(7) *Dass ich das noch erleben durfte.* GERMAN  
COMP I DEM PART live may.PST  
'I never thought I'd be able to see this.'

(8) *At noget så katastrofalt kan ende så godt.* DANISH  
COMP something so catastrophic can.PRS end so well.  
'[I can't believe] that something so catastrophic can end so well.'

(9) *Att du hann med tåget!* SWEDISH  
COMP you make.PST with train.DEF  
'[I'm surprised] that you caught the train!' (Delsing 2010: 17)

- Expected** = markers of **repetition/continuity**, or of **necessity/inevitability**

(10) *Tom, dat je weer zoiets moet flikken.* DUTCH  
Tom COMP you again such.thing must.PRS do  
'Tom, why did you have to do that again?'

(11) *Dass du auch immer so direkt sein musst.* GERMAN  
COMP you PRT always so direct be must.PRS  
'Why do you always have to be so direct?'

(12) *Att du aldrig kan passa vad man sager* SWEDISH  
COMP you never can.PRS heed.INF what on say.PRS  
'[I'm annoyed] that you never listen to what one says!'

(13) *Tænk at han altid har den samme skjorte på!* DANISH  
think.IMP COMP he always have.PRS the same shirt on  
'Why does he always wear the same shirt!'

Note: *tænk* (Danish) or *tänk* (Swedish), morphologically identical to imperative 'think'

- Obligatory in Danish 'expected' category, optional in all other cases
- Status:
  - Predicate-like matrix?
  - BUT semantic link with 'expectedness'? (= only obligatory case)

### 2.2. English

Only **unexpected** type:

= very formulaic (*should* of 'surprise')

(14) *That it should have come to this!* (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 944)

### 2.3. Conclusion

- Clear functional niche, vs lexical expression of evaluation (cp König & Siemund 2012)
- Relative uniformity across languages, except for English
- Encoding relatively transparent & compositional
  - Scales ~ unexpectedness (e.g. Zanuttini & Portner 2003)
  - Necessity/inevitability ~ expectedness

		Dutch/German		Danish/Swedish		English
Unexpected	+	Scalar marking	+	Scalar marking ( <i>tænk / tånk</i> )	+	<i>should</i>
Expected	+	Necessity marking	+	Necessity marking <i>tænk / (tånk)</i>	-	

### 3. Deontic types

= **desirability** of a potential SoA

**Basic semantic distinction:** control over SoA

- **Uncontrolled** (aka 'wishes', 'optatives')

= addressee no control over SoA, speaker not intervening in realization

(15) *Dat ze maar gauw volledig genezen is.* DUTCH  
 COMP she PRT quickly fully heal.PTCP be.PRS  
 'I hope she recovers fully soon.'

- **Controlled** (aka 'orders', 'prohibitives', 'permission', 'advice' etc)

= addressee control over SoA, speaker intervening in realization

(16) *Und dass du mir ja nicht wiederkommst!* GERMAN  
 and COMP you me.DAT PRT NEG again.come.PRS  
 'And don't come back!'

#### 3.1. Uncontrolled deontic

##### 3.1.1. Dutch & German

**Meaning:** long-range vs short-range wishes

- Long-range: Realization/continuation of SoA beyond the immediate future
- Short-range: One specific (non)realization of SoA, in here-and-now or immediate future

#### Encoding - Long range

- Dutch  
 = modal verb of potentiality, optionally particle *maar*  
 (17) *Dat je er nog lang van mag genieten.*  
 COMP you EXPL PRT long PREP may.PRS enjoy  
 'I hope you will enjoy it for a long time.'

- German  
 = complex subordinator *auf dass*, optionally subjunctive mood  
 (Use: archaic, strongly context-dependent?)  
 (18) *Auf dass sie noch lange leben!*  
 PREP COMP they PRT long live.PRS  
 'May they live long!'

#### Encoding - short range

- Dutch  
 = particle *maar*, optionally modal verb of potentiality (opposite settings from long-range)  
 (19) *Dat hij maar niet zeeziek word.*  
 CONJ he PART NEG seasick become.PRS  
 'I hope he doesn't get seasick.'
- German  
 = Potential vs counterfactual
  - Potential: particles *nur, bloß*  
 (20) *Dass ihm nur nicht schlecht dabei wird!*  
 COMP he.DAT PRT NEG ill DEM.PREP become.PRS  
 'I hope that doesn't make him feel sick.'
  - Counterfactual: subjunctive or past with non-past reference  
 (21) *Dass ich mir auch mal so etwas leisten könnte!*  
 COMP I I.DAT PRT PRT PRT something afford can.SBJV  
 'If only I could afford something like that.' (Rosengren 1992: 35)

### 3.1.2. English, Danish & Swedish

#### English:

= Not much, except some very archaic types:

- Long-range wishes:  
(22) *For those who produce food: That they may live in peace and justice.*
- Counterfactual wishes:  
(23) *Oh that Publius were here today to school the “constitutional scholar” on the ratification of the constitution.*

#### Swedish & Danish:

= Not much, exc obsolete counterfactual wishes (Lehti-Eklund 2001, Hansen & Heltoft 2011)

(24) *O att jag finge återse henne!* SWEDISH

INTERJ COMP I may.PST see.again.INF her

'If only I could see her again!' (Lehti-Eklund 2001: 86)

### 3.1.3. Conclusion

- Functional niche for non-lexical marking of wishes, versus archaic subjunctive moods & complements of verbs of hoping & wishing
- Less uniformity across languages:
  - Availability of types (synchronically & diachronically)
  - For short-range, most languages have a better-established conditional type
- Encoding less transparent, less easy to derive compositionally (cp controlled deontic)

Meaning		Dutch	German	English	Danish/Swedish
Long-range		+ modals	+ <i>auf dass</i> (subjunctive)	archaic	?
Short-range	Potential	+ <i>maar</i>	+ <i>(nur, bloss)</i>	-	-
	Counterfactual	-	+ subjunctive	archaic	obsolete

### 3.2. Controlled deontic

#### 3.2.1. Dutch & German

**Meaning:** strong vs weak controlled deontic

- **Strong:**
  - Speaker is strongly committed to (non-)realization of SoA
  - Addressee's attitude typically the opposite (~ prohibition, order)
- **Weak:**
  - Speaker is weakly committed to (non-)realization of SoA
  - Addressee's attitude typically not opposite (~ permission, advice)

#### Encoding - strong

- Dutch
    - Polarity constraint: always negative
    - Often particles (*maar*), double complementation with transparent 'main' verb, e.g. cognitive verb in (27) ['don't think that X' --> 'it is not the case that X']
- (25) *Dat ze maar niet te lang blijft teren op die paar goeie liedjes.*  
COMP she PRT NEG too long keep.PRS rely on DEM couple good songs  
'She shouldn't keep relying on that couple of good songs [she made].'
- (26) *Dat je het niet waagt als disc te gaan raiden.*  
COMP you EXPL NEG dare.PRS as disc to go raid  
'Don't dare to go and raid as a disc [role in a computer game].'
- (27) *Dat je maar niet denkt dat ik geen problemen heb hier.*  
COMP you PRT NEG think.PRS CONJ I NEG problems have.PRS here  
'Just don't think that I don't have any problems here.'
- German
    - No polarity constraints
    - Often particles (*ja, bloß*), ethical datives
- (28) *Dass du dich ja warm hältst.*  
COMP you you.ACC PRT warm keep.PRS  
'Make sure you keep warm!'

(29) *Dass du mir bloß nicht unsorgfältig arbeitest.*  
 COMP you I.DAT PRT NEG careless work.PRS  
 'Don't give me any shoddy work!'

#### Encoding - weak

- Dutch
  - Polarity constraint: always affirmative
  - A range of particles working compositionally to derive subtypes of weak deontic modality (permission, advice) and/or trigger pragmatic polarity reversal

(30) *Dat ze ze maar meebrengt zondag.*  
 COMP she them PRT bring.along.PRS Sunday  
 'She can bring them on Sunday.'

(31) *Dat hij misschien eens in zijn achterzak kijkt.*  
 COMP he perhaps PRT in his back.pocket look.PRS  
 'He could try and check his back pocket.'

(32) *Dat hij maar eens probeert je te wippen, ik sla op zijn gezicht.*  
 COMP he PRT PRT try.PRS you to fire, I beat.PRS on his face  
 'He'd better not try and fire you, I'll punch him in the face.'

- German:** absent?

#### 3.2.2. English, Danish & Swedish

English, Danish & Swedish: no clear controlled deontic types

#### 3.2.3. Conclusion

- Less of a functional niche, except for non-2<sup>nd</sup> person ('hortative'-type construction)
- Very little uniformity across languages
- Formal settings:
  - Some transparent, e.g. particles with weak type, German *mir/ja* with strong type (can coerce controlled interpretation in vague instances)
  - Some look quite arbitrary, e.g. polarity constraints, double complement

		Dutch		German	English	Danish/ Swedish
Strong	Negative	+	( <i>maar</i> ) (double complement)	+	( <i>mir, ja</i> ) ( <i>bloss</i> )	-
	Affirmative		-			
Weak	Permission		<i>misschien, eens, maar</i>	-	-	-
	Advice	+	<i>gerust, maar</i>			
	Challenge		<i>maar + eens</i>			

#### 4. Elaborative

##### Meaning

= Speaker elaborates on aspect of preceding discourse, by themselves or by interlocutor

##### Encoding

- Dutch, German, Swedish, Danish  
 = manner demonstratives, 'concluding' elements

(33) A: Hebben jullie wel een pad hierachter?

B: Ja.

A: *Dat je zo met de fiets achter langs kan.* DUTCH

CONJ you DEM with ART bike behind PRT can.PRS

'A: Do you have a path behind (the garden)? B: Yes. A: Where you can reach the garden from the back with your bike.'

(34) A: Und können Sie nun die alten Tischler, die gewandert haben, von denen, die nun überhaupt nicht gewandert haben, auseinanderkennen? GERMAN

*Dass man nun sagen würde, die haben mehr Erfahrung.*

COMP one PRT say would, DEM have.PRS more experience

'And can you distinguish the old carpenters, those who travelled for training, from those who did not do this? In other words, would you say they have more experience?'

(35) A: och man står och balanserar och gör så här/ så påverkar det ofta balanssinnet

B: mm ja SWEDISH

A: *att du känner när man vrider huvudet på ett visst sätt*

COMP you feel.PRS when one turn.PRS head.DEF on a specific way

*så kan man känna sej lite yr*  
 so can.PRES one feel.INF REFL a.little dizzy

'A: [if] one stands and balances and does like this, then it often influences one's balance

B: hmm, yes

A: that you feel that if you turn your head in a specific way you can feel a little dizzy'

(36) A: ja det kan jeg det kan jeg nemlig huske # og jeg (rømmer sig) og så bemærket den  
 når jeg så har været hjemme og været sammen med nogen DANISH

B: *at de så har bemærket det eller at du*  
 COMP they so have.PRS notice.PTCP it or COMP you

'A: yes I can, you see I can remember that # and I and so I have noticed it when I have  
 been at home and have been together with someone

B: that they have noticed it or that you ...'

- English: possibly parallel structures

## Conclusions

- Relative uniformity across languages
- Encoding relatively transparent

## 5. Constructional status and development

**Schematic generalization** for each language?

= good candidates at first sight

- One formal schema shared by all constructions  
 = complementizer (+ word order)
  - Combinational potential with different types of clause-internal marking  
 = modal verbs, moods, particles, polarity markers, scalar markers etc
- ➔ Schematic complement insubordination, specific types derived compositionally, via combinations with transparent clause-internal markers? E.g. evaluation
- Evaluation + scalar marking --> unexpected type
  - Evaluation + necessity marking --> expected type

**Problems** with schematic generalization:

- (i) Not all **formal markers** are as clearly motivated **functionally**, e.g.
- polarity constraint in strong controlled deontic type in Dutch (compare with German)
  - obligatory use of *tænke* in expected evaluative type in Danish (compare with Swedish)
- ➔ Arbitrary markers can define specific construction types, but more difficult to fit into a 'compositional' account of specific-schematic relations
- (ii) **Generalizations** are not always easy to **motivate**
- Lower-level groupings: e.g. uncontrolled deontic
    - Short-range: some varieties of Dutch & German use entirely different (conditional) construction types
    - Long-range: German uses different conjunction altogether
  - Higher-level groupings:  
 = Generalization that covers evaluative, deontic & elaborative types?
    - Schematic generalization problematic semantically
    - Relevant ideas:
      - Deontic-evaluative links (e.g. Van der Auwera & Plungian 1998), but different type of 'evaluative' (expressions of goodness & suitability)
      - 'Interpersonal' generalizations over complement constructions (Verhagen 2005), but not sufficiently constrained (e.g. why no epistemic types?)
- (iii) **Relation to standard subordinate counterparts**  
 = different degrees of independence
- Formally identical to standard subordinate  
 E.g. evaluative, uncontrolled deontic
- (37) a. [*Ik wens*] *Dat jullie nog lang samen gelukkig en gezond*  
 I wish COMP you PRT long together happily and healthily  
*bij elkaar mogen blijven!* DUTCH  
 with each.other may.PRS stay  
 'I wish you can stay together, happy and healthy, for a long time.'
- b. [*Ich hoffe*] *Dass mir bloss nicht die Schneeschuhe verloren gehen.*  
 I hope COMP I.DAT PRT NEG the snow.shoes lost go.PRS  
 '[I just hope] that I won't lose the snowshoes.' GERMAN

c. [*Det irriterar mig*] att du aldrig kan lyssna  
 it irritate.PRS me COMP you never can.PRS listen SWEDISH  
 'It irritates me] that you never listen.'

- Structurally impossible to reconstruct a main clause

E.g. controlled deontic, with illocutionary markers

(38) a. [*\*Ik wil/beveel*] Dat hij **maar** niet denkt ... DUTCH

I want/order COMP he PRT NEG think.PRS

b. *Ik wil/beveel dat hij niet denkt ...*

I want/order COMP he NEG think.PRS

'I don't want him to think that ...'

(39) a. [*\*Ich möchte*] Dass du dich **ja** warm hältst! GERMAN

I would.like COMP you you.ACC PRT warm keep.PRS

b. *Ich möchte, dass du dich warm hältst.*

I would.like COMP you you.ACC warm keep.PRS

'I would urge you to keep warm enough.'

- No clear main clause to reconstruct at all

E.g. elaborative types

### How to interpret these problems?

- Schematic commonality due to origin in complement clause
- BUT generalization is difficult because the real point of origin is different:  
 = larger construction of main & complement clause
- Each type originates in different main-subordinate structure
- Each type has different degree of conventionalization & independence (cp (37)-(39))
  - Semantic features of the main clause 'rub off' onto the complement clause
  - Semantic features can attract markers from analogous main clause types

➔ Origins: most likely separate developmental trajectories, rather than schema abstraction

### 6. Insubordinate status

"Conventionalized main clause use": **criteria?**

- Radical break in **dependency** vs subordinate use
- Often, but not always, break in **semantics** vs subordinate use

### Our data?

- Deontic & evaluative types 'classic' instances of insubordination
- Elaborative types more problematic
  - No break in dependency
  - Word order variation in Swedish and Danish

### Dependency

= Elaborative types are not subordinate, but they are dependent:

- Pragmatically:  
 Dependent on a preceding stretch of discourse they elaborate

- Syntactically:

In some cases close to appositional constructions: 'incremental' equivalents, i.e.

"nonmain-clause continuation[s] of a speaker's turn" (Ford et al. 2002: 16)

(40) Når der bliver bevilliget en masse penge i en god sags  
 when there become.PRS grant.PTCP a lot money in a good cause.POSS  
 tjeneste, så må der jo være noget professionalisme omkring det -  
 favour so must.PRS there PRT be.INF some professionalism around it  
**at man ligesom har styr på sine ting** DANISH  
 COMP one PRT have.PRS control on one's things

'When a lot of money gets attributed to a so-called good cause, then there has to be some professionalism around it – that one so to say has one's things under control.'

### Word order variation: Danish & Swedish

- Evaluative types:  
 Only subordinate word order
- Elaborative types:  
 Both subordinate and main clause order (see Lehti-Eklund 2001 for Swedish)

(41) A: [...] *jobbet direktør det giver jo nok en eller anden prestige*

B: *ja*

DANISH

A: *at så bor du ikke i et eller andet tredjerangshus*

COMP so live.PRS you NEG in one or other third-rate.house

'A: a job as manager certainly implies some prestige. B: yes. A: that you don't live in some third-rate house.'

**Analysis:** alternatives to 'insubordinate' analysis

= subordination 'on the move', within the general confines of dependency

- **Dependency:** maintained, but projected on a different level, with different scope (see also Mithun 2008) ~ relevant parallels:
    - 'Subordinates' taking on coordinate functions & main clause marking  
e.g. Küper (1991) and Günthner (1996) on German *weil* 'because' and *obwohl* 'although', Steensig (1998) on Danish *fordi* 'because', Christensen & Heltoft (2010) on Danish *at*, Verstraete (2007: 181-186) on Germanic and Romance
    - 'Subordinates' with broad discourse scope, e.g. Thompson (1985)
  - **Semantics:** largely preserved ~ relevant parallel:  
Compare Sweetser (1990) on links between real-world relations and textual relations
- ➔ Alternative analysis captures three 'aberrant' properties of elaborative constructions
- Complementizers still mark dependency relation, on a different level
  - Word order can shift to main clause pattern
  - Semantics of construction largely preserved

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